Even now
the ideal marriage is one contracted between a
582 grown man and a small girl. He contributes to the economy
586 of the house, makes ornaments for his young wife, defends
her from sexual assaults by other men, and, what is most im-
portant, he is the one responsible for the physical develop-
586 ment of the girl. The Bororo believe that the growth of the
831 breasts is the result of the man's handling the sexual organs
833 of his young wife. A good husband will try to enlarge the
opening of the hymen with his fingers so that the first in-
tercourse will be less painful, or, if he was particularly
831 good and patient, without any pain whatsoever. Only then,
833 after defloration, can the first menstruation be expected at
841 the next moon. Supposedly there also exists a direct rela-
tionship between the quantity of a man's sperm and the fre-
quency of menstruation of the woman he is having intercourse
with. The attentive husband will not drink those juices
which are supposed to increase the quantity of semen to spare
785 his wife the trouble of menstruating twice in a moon. Both
515 wife and husband fast while she is menstruating; they also
753 avoid drinking and taking baths. A girl who is having sexual
relations with several men will notify all of them when she
menstruates so that they may observe these rules, since
otherwise they can become sick.

844 The night before childbirth, the pregnant woman and her
828 husband--and her lovers, if she has lovers--try not to sleep
in order to avoid bad dreams. When the pain starts, the
woman, with the assistance of her mother and her husband's
mother or sister, goes into the woods where the child should

Chapter VIII

FAMILY LIFE

592 The basic economic unit consists of a woman and her husband, her daughters and their husbands, and all their unmarried children. After initiation the sons move into the men's house, but all their belongings remain in their mother's house, and their food continues to be prepared in their natal home until they marry. If they later divorce, their mothers and sisters will again care for them. When a man marries he moves into his wife's house on the other side of the village, but his most precious ornaments remain behind, in care of his sisters' husbands. A house may be occupied by several extended families, each family having its own fireplace. If the families are small, the sisters decide whether they will cook together or separately. When they cook together they use the same fireplace, but each woman cooks in her own pots and provides her own firewood. The families living in one house do not eat together, but the women always exchange some of the food they have prepared. They also help each other care for the children. If a woman is busy making fire or cooking, one of her sisters will take the baby for her; and when a woman goes into the woods to collect firewood, her mother or sister will take care of the

/137 cont./

595 and she remains owner of the house, we would have to oppose the one that in similar circumstances polygyny is not only conceivable, but also in use, as examples from Africa show.

[121] /138/ On the other hand, certainly, no case among primitive peoples is known to me in which patrilocality and patriliny are joined with polyandry, while the latter, in combination with matrilocality and the matriliny is not only possible, but also extant, as I found out precisely among the Bororo. The Indians in Meruri, for example, Aipobureu, called Tiage Marques by the missionaries, told me that formerly it would happen that an energetic woman might have two husbands if she were capable of supporting both with the produce of harvesting. They said that such cases had surely been very rare. Later one of these cases was confirmed for me in Sangradouro by the Bororo Kudde, belonging to the clan of the Bokodori and called Mario by the whites.

121 582 591 One can say, in general, that among primitive peoples with matrilocal and matrilineal institutions matrimony has fewer fixed rules than among peoples with patrilocal and patrilineal institutions. Among the first, everything is adjusted in an easier and more natural way, the sexes are united numerically according to necessity and capacity, also being able to separate with fewer impediments, since the children remain with the mother. Among the Bororo, the initiative for divorce can come from the husband as well as from the wife.

[586] 586

121 It is beyond doubt that, among primitive peoples, both the man and the woman are respected by the other sex and desired for matrimony according to the capacity for work. On this, however, there are exceptions, as /139/ among us: sometimes the lazier woman has, thanks to her "sex appeal," the harder-working husband, and a sluggish man has a more diligent wife.

/148 cont./

578 embracing him. Besides this, the men tie some whole skins
411 of the tail of the ray on the calves of the leg and then throw
[123] the leg between the upper parts of the enemies' thighs. In the missions as well as in Tori-paru I was able to acquire these weapons. Not only by means of them, but also with their nails pointed especially for this purpose, the women
[562] scratch the face and the body of the antagonist. While doing it, they utter many sharp screams, while the men fight in silence, except, if the ounce were the adversary, they would try to irritate it by means of shouting.

562 The Bororo women do not fight only because of jealousy,
578 but also when their children do some harm to one another or
521 when they themselves get furious because of some gossip.
152 Quickly they become friends with one another, in order to be able to tell scandalous stories about friends. By doing this, they try to find out the secrets of the new friend, gossiping about her afterwards in the same way as about the /149/ others. The men likewise are masters at lying and slandering. And as happens with all the gossipers of the world, the Bororo too, man and woman, are supersensitive; and easily become irritated when someone finds something to say about them themselves.

586 Neither sex severely protects conjugal fidelity. In
178 this respect the director of the mission of Meruri told me:
593 "In the past they would separate when the marriage was not going well; today, however, the marriages being Christian, and thus indissoluble, the husband would thrash the woman." As I found out, at times these beatings go as far as homicide. It is said that even in the past too, although rarely, it would happen that the man would kill the woman, and that, on the other hand, it would also happen that the woman's relatives liquidated him with some vegetal poison.

562 If the Salesian padres affirm that the position of the
114 woman in the past was worse than today, and that now in
797

7:Cook M-3 (1900-1901) 1907
SP8 Bororo SP8

582
turn for such a present. When he would take his betrothed to him- 583
self he makes a second similar present to her parents and they deliver her to him in his hut. Parents try to betroth their daughters while still young. We saw no large families, the largest number of children any one mother had being three. Extremely early marriage and the fact that the wife is driven to the baehytu whenever she displeases her lord may be reasons for small families. They hold their wives in utter subjection through fear of the bope and of the baehytu. A few of the leading men have two wifes, an [595]
old one, and perhaps also a girl wife. Only men who have killed the spotted tiger, or performed some other feat of valor, may take a second wife. Children are not born in the village. The pros- 844
pective mother hides herself in the bush until the child is born, and then returns to the village or is led back by female friends who go in search of her. It is common for children, espe- 862
cially girls, to nurse until they are six or eight years old, so large indeed that they can stand on the ground and nurse while the mother also stands. Younger children will climb up the mother's leg to reach her breast. They nurse at any time, the mother paying scarcely any attention to the child, who does absolutely as it pleases. The Xeráede and the Ta Naragêda in each village eats, fishes, hunts, works, and plays by itself. A man of the Xeráede cannot marry 582
a woman of his own party, but must select one from the Ta Naragêda, and vice versa. The Bororó have a tradition that the 173
Xeráede once possessed all things that the Bráede, civilized men, now possess, such as knives, axes, blankets, etc., but as these things brought calamity, they were obliged to abandon them. There is evidence that these Indians are made up of what was once two distinct tribes. The Xeráede tradition might indicate that the Bororó may have come in touch with the civilization of the Andean slope in ancient times.

The men are usually faithful to their wives—that is, they do not 586
abandon them, especially where they have children, though at rare intervals one will become dissatisfied with his areda, drive her from the hut, and he himself take up his abode elsewhere. Fights 578
between two married men are not uncommon through one intriguing with the other's wife. The conflict begins when the outraged husband berates the guilty one in shouts so loud that the whole village can hear, and the latter in turn at the other end of the village returns the compliment with interest. As they warm in their anger they emerge from their huts and finally get together, while all the men, women, and children of the village form a ring around them to

8:Cook M-3 (1900-1901) 1909
SP8 Bororo SP8

853 children climb the mother's leg to nurse. She does not appear to take any more notice of her child at such times than does a 162 mother goat her kid. Bororó families are small. I did not see a mother with more than three children. The *mêdo* are usually 593 faithful to their wives; that is, they seldom desert them, especially if they have children. At rare intervals, one becomes 586 dissatisfied with his *arêda* and drives her from his hut, then leaving home himself, goes to reside in some other village of the tribe.

578 Fights between two *mêdo* are not uncommon, owing, nearly always, to one meddling with the *arêda* of the other. The fight is precipitated by the outraged husband, as he perhaps sits at work in his hut, beginning to express his opinion of the other *mêdo*, and to hurl at him offensive epithets. The other *medo*, sitting in his hut at the opposite side of the cluster of huts, responds loudly with interest. As they become more and more enraged, they challenge each other to fight, prepare themselves and come out of their huts, and finally meet on the village playground; and every *mêdo*, *arêda*, and *naragêda*—child—in the local horde abandons at once every occupation and forms a circle around the combatants, for an event of this kind is considered the finest kind of sport and not to be missed on any account. This is a go-as-you-please encounter; there are no rules, except that the dualists do not use deadly weapons. So they roll and tumble, and kick, and punch, and bite, and scratch one another, having the poisonous spine of the fish called sting-ray, armed to their little fingers, and bellow and roar continually, like fiends. Their powers of endurance are marvelous, and the combat often continues many hours. Finally, one is vanquished, and he leaves the village and the *arêda* in question to the victor, and takes up his residence in a distant village of [674] the tribe. The Bororó rarely murder one another.

142 The Bororó women are nearly as large and scarcely less 147 muscular than the men, and can carry heavy loads great distances, having been inured to this from childhood. When a 484 family moves from one village to another, or goes forth on a 482 two or three months' hunting and fishing expedition during the 462